



Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
**Mental Health Advisory Committee Minutes**

Members Present	Technical Advisors Present	NCDHH Staff Present
Melinda Brown	Diane Meyer	Peggy Williams
Mary Slominski	Mandy Leamon	Tanya Wendel
Jackie Prater Johnson		Susan Hayes
		Beth Ellsworth

**Date:** Tuesday, August 15, 2006

**Location:** 1313 Farnam-on-the-Mall, 3<sup>rd</sup> FL, Room G

**Acting Chairperson:** Mary Slominski

**Interpreters:** Beth Townsend and Beth Koubsky

**Members, Technical Advisors and Staff Not Present**

Vickie Frizzell Pratt, Richard McCowin and Vickie Steinhauer Campbell.

**I. AGENDA**

**A. Gather and Welcome**

Ms. Slominski called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM, welcomed everyone and asked members and technical advisors to introduce themselves.

**B. Approval of May 16, 2006 Minutes**

Minutes from the May 16, 2006 meeting were read and a motion was made by Melinda Brown to approve the minutes as read and was seconded by Jackie Prater Johnson.

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

- A.** Ms. Williams reported that Vickie Frizzell Pratt and Jackie Prater Johnson's terms expired last month but both want to continue serving another three year term. Ms. Pratt and Ms. Prater Johnson will send a letter to Ms. Wendel requesting to serve on the advisory committee for another term.

**B. MENTAL HEALTH GOAL 4.0**

Ms. Williams passed out the Mental Health Specialist Goals, Objectives & Activities for 2006-2009. She indicated she will be using a three-phased (three-year 2006-2009) approach. Discussion was held about developing a training CD to be sent to remote locations about NCDHH's Mental Health Services. Melinda Brown moved to accept the goals and objectives as presented and was seconded by Diane Meyer.

### **C. NeRID Representative**

The committee discussed the suggestion on having an interpreter on the Mental Health Advisory Committee to serve as a Technical Advisor representing the profession of interpreting. It was agreed that Ms. Williams will send a letter to Connie Herndon, President for NeRID and state our interest in having a representative from NeRID to serve as Technical Advisor to the NCDHH Mental Health Advisory Committee.

## **III. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. RTC and Alegent Health**

Ms. Williams stated that there have been concerns expressed about the lack of residential treatment programs for Deaf, Hard of Hearing Youth and Adolescents in Nebraska. As a result of these concerns a committee was established to discuss what could be done to address these concerns. The committee consists of Diane Meyer (Metro Regional Program), Cathy Carotta (Boys Town), Maureen Mann (Boys Town), Kris Mixon (Boys Town), Melinda Brown (Boys Town), Rhonda Fleischer (Dept. of Education), Tanya Wendel (NCDHH), Peggy Williams (NCDHH), Pat Connell (Boys Town) and Jeanne Prickett (ISD).

A meeting was held with Steve Spelic, Operations Director for Alegent Health and Mary Steiner with HHSS/Medicaid to discuss concerns about treatment options for deaf and hard of hearing youth and adolescents. Discussion regarding special needs and services were discussed. Mr. Spelic stated he would take the information discussed back to Alegent to discuss the possibility of a partnership through Alegent. A meeting is scheduled for Thursday; 8/17/06 with Mr. Spelic to discuss Alegent's decision on working with this committee to develop treatment services for deaf and hard of hearing youth and adolescents with Alegent's-Immanuel Hospitals Mental Health Program. It is the committee's hope to achieve maximum services for deaf and hard of hearing patient(s) and to add extra incentive to the Midwest.

There are currently no similar programs in the Dakotas or Iowa. There is however one in Colorado. Alegent offers emergency services when a student is in crisis. The patient can be evaluated within 24-48 hours then released with follow-up appointments. There are satellite programs in the vicinity i.e. in Glenwood, IA where the State Hospital/Resource Center resides. The expanded services could keep deaf and hard of hearing children from being sent away as far as Florida for treatment.

Ms. Brown discussed some of her concerns when the Police are contacted by parents/guardians and some of the issues that come up during the police

contact, i.e., using hearing parents or siblings to interpret. It was suggested that Ms. Williams contact the Lincoln Police Department and encourage them to incorporate deafness/hearing loss training in to their training curriculum. It was also recommended that Ms. Williams contact the YWCA and the UNO Criminal Justice Program to discuss training options as well.

#### **B. CPS Training**

Ms. Williams passed out the outline that is being used for the statewide training that she and Ms. Brown are providing for Child Protective Services Workers. Completed trainings have been held June 28th, 2006 in Norfolk, July 18th in Gering and July 27th in Grand Island. Training has been requested for November 1st in Holdrege, September 15th in Lincoln and October 25th in Lincoln. Ms. Williams thanked Ms. Brown for her effort and the time she has taken to assist with the training. NCDHH will write a letter to Melinda's supervisor, Dr. Cathy Carotta to commend Ms. Brown on her performance.

#### **C. Emergency Preparedness**

Ms. Wendel and Ms. Williams announced that Nebraska was selected as a site to host the "Emergency Responders and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community: Taking the First Steps to Disaster Preparedness". The training will be held on September 12, 2006 at the Lincoln Police Department. Ms. Williams explained that the training required 20 consumers and 20 Emergency Responders. The consumer involvement for the training must include 4 deaf, 4 deaf/blind, 4 signing hard of hearing, 4 non-signing hard of hearing and 4 late deafened. The primary focus of the curriculum is to provide direct interaction between first responders and people who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened and deaf/blind individuals. Information about this training has been posted on the NCDHH web page. Ms. Williams passed out a flier announcing the training.

Scheduled participants at this time include: HHSS, Region 5, Omaha Fire Department, Lincoln Police Department and the Civil Air Patrol. The NE Volunteer Service Commission Citizen Corps is assisting the Commission by promoting this training with Emergency Responders and Emergency Management.

### **AGENCY UPDATES**

**Boystown National Research Hospital – Melinda Brown**

Ms. Brown reported that the LLTC Mental Health Advisory committee is meeting to discuss treatment needs and options for deaf and hard of hearing youth and adolescents.

#### **Kid Power-Teen Power Freedom Power...Prevent Bullying-Diane Meyer**

Ms. Meyer will share more information about this at a later date. She indicated that this training would probably be targeting “girls bullying girls”. They have recently found emails and text messaging to be particularly nasty. The session runs from 1-2 hours. The information can also be given to teachers to be used as a teaching tool.

#### **Deaf Missions in Council Bluffs has Deaf Person’s Internship**

20 college kids go there for credits to learn about deaf people.

#### **Regional Programs-Diane Meyer**

Ms. Meyer announced that there will be a November education opportunity, “Close-Up” in Washington D.C. They will tour monuments, talk to Senators; learn how a bill is made and maybe see the Holocaust Museum. She stated that there will be an activity with the Lied Technology Center to do an art mural for the Lied Technology Center.

In February a Young Americans program will be offered in Grand Island for Deaf and Hard of Hearing 3rd-12th grade students. They will learn dance steps combined with story telling and artisans. The Optimist Club is sponsoring a speech contest for deaf and hard of hearing students in Columbus April 14, 2007 for ages 7-12. Last year over 20 kids participated. A spelling bee (finger spelling bee) will be held at the same time for students ages 5-6. Two of the top 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders will receive \$1,000.00 scholarships.

#### **Licensing-Tanya Wendel**

Ms. Wendel announced that the Licensing Bill has passed and the effective date is June 30, 2007 and stated that this ruling doesn’t impact K-12 or the medical field. It does however, impact Mental Health if it’s a State funded program.

Ms. Wendel stated that a draft of regulations is on the NCDHH web site. She asked that comments be made “in writing” or anyone was welcome to attend the September 9<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing. A flier announcing the hearing was passed out. She stated that you must identify specific text you disagree with and offer recommendations and the change would be made in a year or two. Ms.

Wendel said that there are many problems with court interpreters such as a lack of qualified Interpreters. She stated that court interpreters pay hasn’t increased since 1999. There is currently a committee the courts have established and they have provided their recommendations as well. Ms. Wendel

expressed that there is a need for statewide access for video phone usage and stated she is working on this issue.

**Lutheran Family Services-Mary Slominski**

LFS is concerned with services being provided through Telehealth. She stated she is still seeing clients via Telehealth but LFS is losing money using this process to provide counseling. Ms. Slominski announced she is going into private practice in Bellevue. She will continue to look for grant opportunities for LFS.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next Mental Health Advisory Committee meeting will be held on November 21, 2007 from 2:00-4:00 PM, 4600 Valley Road, Lincoln in classroom 416. Pam Brown, Executive Director for the NE Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition will meet with the advisory committee to discuss her program as well as future projects with the Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.